

[Continued from First Page.]
has not been recorded by one of the Levuka photographers it is a pity, for it would have made an excellent picture. After the Constitution had been signed by the King, the latter addressed the House in Fijian. He spoke well, but occasionally paused and consulted in an undertone with his interpreter, Mr. Wilkinson. The following is a translation of his address:

"I rise to return thanks to you for assembling here on my invitation to frame a Constitution for Fiji. I am very glad to see that so many delegates have been sent to assist in the formation of a Government. Fiji is a dark land—we look to you for light as to law and civilization. This kingdom now formed is not your kingdom nor their kingdom, but our kingdom. We are one. It would not be difficult to divide Fiji, the whites to have one Government and the Fijians to have another, but that would be worse for both. Or you might have three Governments, one for the whites, one for the Fijians, and one for the blacks, and another of Cakodrevi, and another of Muceneta, but divided one against the other, we should quarrel and fight one with another, and that would be bad for all. You see my friend Mauda sitting by my side. Mauda and I are now of one spirit, and if you can be one with us it will be good for all. Mauda is now a Fijian, and if there be any difficulty in carrying out this Constitution, it will not be with us, but with you white residents. I wish to say a few words about the Ba murders. White men have been massacred by the heathen mountaineers. Do not think you only are injured and pained in this matter; the Fijians also sorrow therein. We sorrow with you in this matter, and are willing to help at the right time. It is a serious business to punish those mountaineers, and must be taken in hand wisely, so as to make success certain. Mauda and other chiefs are with me to assist, and if we all be one in this matter, not only will the murderers be punished, but the whole coast be made safe for the future. Let us act cautiously and prudently in this matter. I think also you native chiefs for assembling here to render me your help. Only one chief is absent that is Tui Cakau. I regret his absence, but my friend Mauda is here, and that will be all right. Again thanking you for your attendance here, I dismiss this House of Delegates. The next gathering of this House will be the Legislative Assembly. Let us be united, and all will be peace and prosperity in Fiji. My words are now ended."

The formal dissolution of the Assembly was followed immediately by a levee on the European plan. The King being introduced to and shaking hands with everybody in turn. And very well he did his part. Some of the native chiefs could not quite understand the hand-shaking part of the business, and showed an inclination to crouch down after the Fijian fashion, but Thakombu promptly repressed every such attempt by slapping the passing chief good humoredly on the breast, to keep him upright, giving him a hearty grasp of the hand, and pushing him on. An hour or so after the levee there was a luncheon and wine for the delegates and other magnates of the land at the King's house, and in the evening there was an official dinner. I was invited to both of these "affairs," but did not feel well enough to attend either. But I am happy to say that the first thing thought of by the old King was gratitude to the Almighty Power, which he used Thakombu's own words, "had been so good to him." From the Parliament house, and after the conclusion of what to him must have been the most triumphant and gratifying ceremony in which he ever took part, the King went direct to the Wesleyan church, where the Rev. Mr. Nettleton offered up prayer, and preached a sermon suited to the occasion.

Having described the "launching" of the new Constitution, I will, before going into other details as to persons by whom, and circumstances by which Fijian politics will be governed or affected, revert to Levuka.

The aspect of the place as it is approached from the sea is very beautiful. A photographic view of it which I have seen in a shop in Hunter street, a little above the *Herald* Office, gives an accurate idea of the general appearance of the town as can be conveyed in this way. But this, after all, is very—and unavoidably—imperfect. The rich coloring which constitutes the principal charm of the scene is wanting. The whole island of Ovalau is encircled by a coral reef, on which the waves of the mighty Pacific are broken into glittering spray. There are several openings through this reef, that by which vessels enter near Levuka, being large enough for the largest sized craft. The space between the reef and the shore is of varying width, but is everywhere around this island, of ample extent. The water within it is generally almost as smooth as a canal, and although roughened a little in bad weather, or near a passage through the reef, is safely navigable by the smallest craft, except during those heavy gales as, if they were to visit Port Jackson, would churn up its waters to a dangerous height. The town has been built on a piece of flat land between high water mark and the hills. Neither the extent of this flat nor of the town itself, as seen from a ship's deck, can be very well judged of. But the place has a business-like look, and the tropical scenery which it is surrounded gives it, to eyes long accustomed only to the Australian bush, a peculiar charm. Graceful coconut palms are plentifully scattered through the town, with here and there a bread-fruit tree by way of variety. Behind the town is a range of lofty hills, some sloping gradually and others rising more abruptly. Those in the extreme background are surrounded by scarcely accessible pinnacles, which are often cloud-capped. On the slopes and in the gorges of these hills other groves of coconut and bread-fruit trees are seen. On the lower hills, immediately behind the town, are a number of pretty cottages of various sizes—some of considerable extent. At one end of the town a church spire rises into view: other places of worship in different situations can be easily distinguished from the anchorage, and many hotels and business premises of considerable size are equally prominent.

The mail steamer is scarcely at anchor ere there are many shore boats alongside, and what could scarcely be expected in such a place, there is a real "jolly young waterman" ready to land a passenger and his traps at a very reasonable charge. The beach is fringed by a considerable space of very shallow water, but landing has been facilitated by the erection of three good jetties. Availing yourself of one of these, you are introduced to *terra firma* in the shape of a beach of the very roughest stones of all sizes, making about as uncomfortable a pathway as could well be imagined. Fronting this beach, and forming a kind of irregular street about a mile in length, stand a number of buildings of various shapes and sizes, generally of one story only, but sometimes of two, and nearly all built of wood, with iron roofs. Some of these are dwelling-houses, but they are mostly hotels or stores. Behind this street there is a good deal of vacant space, over which many other buildings—mostly small—are scattered. Some of these have been built with little regard to regularity, and present the appearance of newly-laid-out

streets; but others seem as if thrown haphazard on to the ground which they occupy, and form all manner of angles. Some of these buildings are of reeds and thatch, in the native fashion, though shaped according to European tastes. These, however, are in the minority. The old Reading-room, now promoted to the rank of a "Parliament House," has already been mentioned. The divisions of the town on either side of this are distinguished as North and South Levuka. North Levuka is the greater of the two, although the business appears to be about equally divided. The largest hotels and the showiest commercial establishments are at the northern end of the town. Here, too, is the temporary residence of the King while at Levuka. It is a single-storyed weatherboard cottage, with a small courtyard and a long verandah, on which one or two native guards, armed with rifle and sword, may always be seen. From a flagstaff in front flows the "Royal Standard." It is white, with a red shield in the centre, on which is a white dove bearing the usual olive branch. Above this shield is a crown. The ensigns, which are displayed from various small vessels in the harbor, differ only from the Standard in being of white and blue—equally divided, vertically; the white next the staff or halliards, and the central shield and cross across the dividing line.

We will not, at present, seek the province of reality, but will continue our inspection of the town. Its most remarkable feature, perhaps, is the number of its hotels and public houses—some of considerable dimensions, but any of them mere shambles of three or four rooms. There are, I believe, over thirty of these places, although the total population of the town, including a fair average of visitors, does not exceed five hundred. But there are no signs of any police restrictions as to accommodations, and all drinkables are imported free of duty. Any one who pleases can set up as a retailer of wine, beer and spirits, and these articles are sold at real hotel prices, a very small margin yield a comparatively large profit. Very fair quarters can be had at several of the principal hotels, although sometimes at the risk of getting into strange company, and with no certainty of quiet neighbors. The usual charges for board and lodging are about six shillings per day, but there will be many little extras. There is, I believe, but one private lodging-house. A good establishment of this description on one of the hills, would, I should think, be well patronized. A Levuka Club has been formed. The club-house is in South Levuka. The members are inconspicuously few, ever ready to extend hospitality to well-introduced strangers, but the club-house itself is rather small, and affords but scant sleeping accommodation.

If Levuka is a little too well provided with places for the sale of intoxicating drinks, it has the more pleasing feature of being spiritually cared for in a better way. There are three churches resorted to by the white inhabitants, besides two or three chapels for the natives. The denominations to which these churches belong are the Anglican, the Wesleyan and the Roman Catholic. The Anglican church is a very neat wooden building at the foot of a gentle slope. The Rev. Mr. Floyd, a zealous and accomplished divine of the Church of England, is the incumbent. The Wesleyan church is a substantial French style, with a steeple, and stands at the foot of a hill not far from the beach. It is well furnished within and without, and very commodious. The Rev. Mr. Nettleton, who is at present at the head of the Wesleyan mission in Fiji, and as able and worthy a minister as ever stood in a pulpit, ordinarily officiates at this church, but is frequently assisted by a brother minister, the Rev. Mr. Jones. The Roman Catholic church is a really handsome building of wood, with a metal-covered spire and a set of bells. Its altar and other internal fittings are very tasteful, and it stands in a most picturesque situation, surrounded by all kinds of tropical greenery, and with beautiful foliage-clad hills in the background. The Rev. Father Reddy, a pious, earnest and learned French priest, is the pastor. These churches are all in South Levuka, the Roman Catholic church being the southernmost of the three. The Wesleyan church has much the largest congregation. The Rev. Mr. Nettleton is very popular, and deservedly so. To the Wesleyan Missionaries and their helpers Fiji and the Fijians owe nearly all of moral and social progress that has been attained here, and Mr. Nettleton has borne a distinguished part in this labor of love. I cannot presume to judge as to the religious character of the natives in general; but it seemed to me that there was more of sincerity among them than they ordinarily have credit for. In their social life they have certainly progressed wonderfully, and this is clearly attributable to the influence and example of the mission families, as much as to the teachings of the missionaries themselves. I may here remark that one of the most pleasing features of Levuka is the total absence of any of those sectarian dissensions which disturb the peace of some other and more important islands. It is not that the Levukans, taking them as a whole, are less alive to the duties of religion, but that those who do profess the duties of the great Christian family have more charity towards each other. The best sermon I ever heard in my life—according to my poor notions of the kind of language which ought to flow from the lips of a Christian minister—a sermon in which this tolerant spirit was strongly and eloquently commended—was once preached by the Rev. Mr. Nettleton at a large and attentive Sunday evening's congregation.

Levuka has a theatre—so sufficiently commodious, although plain, roof-covered building—with a very fair stage. It does not appear to be as much used however as might be expected. There was but one entertainment during my visit and this was given by a travelling pantomime. The audience on that occasion displayed a large amount of good temper, but was a little noisy. There is a dramatic club in the place, but the members do not appear inclined to perform very often. Artists from San Francisco come to the Australian colonies on a good house for a single night. Some of the hotels have rooms suitable for concerts, but no amusements of this kind appear to be thought of. There are a few billiard tables, and I am told there are several good tables and a number of very good players here. When they get thirsty, as of course they generally do, the means of slaking their thirst is always close at hand. A very good bowling-alley is situated in North Levuka. The only theatre for the bulk of the foreign population that is to be found in the place is the cinema, which is the only amusements that have been brought to the place. It is a little conversation and sundry "friendly glasses," it is not at all surprising that some who put up at the larger hotels should often complain of being kept awake by noisy companions during several of the "small hours," while it is astonishing that there is so little real disorder.

But I have already said that there are the elements of refined society in and around Levuka, and there are many houses to which those who are well introduced find ready access—where all the social amenities and rational enjoyments of civilized life can be had. The social life of what may be termed the "upper circle" of Levuka differs in no material respect from that of persons similarly situated in other countries, except that there is a more hearty and easy hospitality. The evenings I spent at the house of Mr. C—have left many pleasant memories. Nor are the more brilliant phases of social intercourse wanting. I had the honor of being present at an "evening party" (at Mr. M—'s), which was very successful and affable, and the giving of a similar kind in the colonies could have been better. The presence of beautiful and elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen in full evening costume, the choice "spread" on the supper table, and the general appearance of the place, rendered it difficult to believe that one was in the midst of what, to a very distant point, was truly "a cannibal-land." The "upper circle" will be readily enlarged as many of those who are now known here as Benedicta. Female presidency only is wanting to make Levuka a really attractive place for any one who is not averse to a little of the "civilized" life.

Before the proclamation of "constitutional government," the only persons possessing even nominal authority among the white inhabitants at Levuka were the foreign consuls. There were three of these functionaries, representing respectively the Governments of Great Britain, the United States, and the Hawaiian Islands. It has been already stated that by far the greater number of the white settlers are British subjects. But the consular representation of the United States and the Hawaiian Islands is of considerable importance, and the progress of the settlement of disorder or the settlement of disputes arising among these people. All can depend upon the weight of his own personal influence, backed as regards any person who might be disposed to be unusually troublesome—by the dread of possible departure to the colonies, or of arrest, on board of a ship of war. A more satisfactory and trying situation than that of the gentlemen filling this post can scarcely be imagined. Before visiting Levuka I had heard Mr. March, the present British Consul, a good deal spoken of, and in various terms. It was pretty clear, however, that with many of the British Levukans he was decidedly unpopular. On attempting to ascertain and analyze the causes of this feeling, they seemed to me to be of two kinds: the one, that he was a foreigner, and the other, that he was a man of high and haughty and exclusive. Now let it be understood that Mr. March is—by birth, education, and habits—a gentleman; that his position is, as I have said, a most embarrassing one, with so many responsibilities and such little real power, that he must very frequently (and necessarily) display a high and haughty and exclusive; and that he is often brought into contact with many people from whom nothing but a decidedly high tone could enforce respect. Bearing these things in mind, it is easy to understand how the charges of haughtiness and exclusiveness may have arisen, and been spread abroad, without any foundation in truth or justice. My stay in Levuka was too short, and my acquaintance with the town too superficial, to enable me to speak authoritatively upon these points, but it seemed to me that Mr. March was as efficient an officer as the miserably cramped nature of his powers, and of the means at his disposal, enabled him to be. It is the Imperial Government should carry out the scheme which it is reported to have been about to execute, and to give the consuls powers to the Consulate, I have no doubt that Mr. March might very safely be entrusted with such powers. But I must candidly say that I can see no probability of any such scheme being satisfactorily worked out. The representative of his Majesty at Levuka could not be authorized to deal with the cases of British subjects; and there would consequently be no means of getting into touch with the consuls, who would have no power of interference. Foreign interests might even be interfered in business transactions in order to outbid his jurisdiction. Again, the authority to award penalties or decree payment of debts or damages would be very little practical utility unless there was also sufficient power on the spot to enforce the judgments thus pronounced. This would require almost as strong a British establishment in the Archipelago as a veritable protectorate. It is true that a recognized and efficient Fijian Government might, under treaty stipulations, carry out the sentences and awards of a British extra-territorial Court; but if the Fijian Government were strong enough to be called upon to undertake this duty, it might very well be left, like other Governments, to deal with these matters in its own courts. There might be to criminal charges a statutory power of commitment for trial in an Australian Court; but besides that, this would be a dangerous and possibly oppressive power, it would be seldom that a case could be sent on to Australia for trial, and the consuls would be left with no means of getting into touch with the consuls, who would have no power of interference. Foreign interests might even be interfered in business transactions in order to outbid his jurisdiction. 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